

NSC BRIEFING

10 July 1957

SOVIET LEADERSHIP: THE WINNING FACTION

I. Khrushchev may wish to continue the system of "collective leadership" but it is difficult to see how it can be more than a facade for one-man leadership. With possible exception of Zhukov, no men are left on the Presidium who have strength or inclination to oppose his views.

A. Reports persist that Zhukov's support was crucial to Khrushchev's success. However, since Zhukov had been the ranking candidate member of Presidium, inclusion of him among promotions to full membership cannot be taken as a reward for special services.

1. Fact remains that he now has a political standing which no Soviet military figure has ever enjoyed before.
2. Although he has stressed in the past that his primary concern is military affairs, not politics, the line of demarcation between these areas is almost indistinguishable where such things as disarmament, Satellite security, and Soviet industrial output are concerned.
3. Within the new Presidium, Zhukov seems best able to maintain some freedom from Khrushchev's dominance by virtue of his enormous prestige and the extra-Party power he commands. The kind of accommodation the two men work out between themselves will probably determine course of the post-purge leadership.

B. Mikoyan, Bulganin and possibly Suslov of the remaining old members are not total ciphers but their power may now be

II. Taken individually the new members of the Presidium are no match for Khrushchev and they are unlikely to pose serious restraints on his policies. He may, however, be forced to heed their general views.

A. In contrast to the pre-purge Presidium, the new body is composed in the main of Party careerists who currently occupy important posts in the Party's central apparatus or in its republic and provincial organizations.

1. The removal of the four purge victims, the exclusion of Saburov from the Presidium and Pervukhin's demotion to candidate status reduced the role in policy formulation of persons whose principal duties lay in the field of government, rather than purely Party, administration.
2. A vital factor in his victory, for example, was his backing by Party functionaries in the central committee.
3. Since Stalin's death, the trend has been for the central committee to exert an increasing influence on policy. Final authority may now rest with it, and a new Stalin could only recover this authority by purge and terror.
4. An attempt to reimpose arbitrary rule through coercion would probably bring on revolution and civil war, with the outcome uncertain.

B. Khrushchev will probably be able to get his way without doing this. The new Presidium is liberally stocked with his supporters.

1. All members of the central committee secretariat are now full members of the Presidium except Pospelov, who is

a candidate. This means that the body charged with day-to-day supervision of Party business will now participate directly in the formulation of the policies which they implement. Previously only Khrushchev and Suslov were full members.

2. Leading members of the central committee's Bureau for the RSFSR were also elevated to the Presidium. Khrushchev as Chairman has dominated this group.

3. Five members of the Presidium (Brezhnev, Kirichenko, Korotchenko, Krilenko and Mzhavanadze) climbed on the Khrushchev band-wagon when he was Party chief in the Ukraine. Furtseva, Ignatov, Kozlov and Mukhitdinov profited from his patronage after he became CPSU First Secretary.

C. At least 16 of the 24 Presidium members and candidates are "Khrushchev men."

III. The Soviet Union's national minority groups were accorded special recognition on the Presidium.

A. One representative of each of the five major national minority areas was elected to the group.

1. The Baltic is represented by Yan Kalnberzin, boss of the Latvian Party,
2. Belorussia - by republic Party First Secretary Mazurov,
3. Ukraine - by Party chief Aleksey Kirichenko,
4. Transcaucasia - by Georgian Party chief Mzhavanadze,
5. and Central Asia by Uzbek Party first secretary Nuritdin Mukhitdinov.

B. The Ukraine received a bonus in the election of its titular chief of state Demyan Korotchenko, who is an old friend of Khrushchev, and who may eventually take Voroshilov's place as USSR chief of state.

IV. The average age of Presidium members is 57 years, as compared with 57 and a half years for the Stalinist Presidium elected in 1952.

A. Fifteen of the 24 men on the presidium joined the Party during Lenin's lifetime, and all but the two youngest (Mazurov-43, Mukhitdinov-40) had become Communists by 1931.